

Message Text

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AMCONSUL UDORN
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05881

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PFOR MOPS LA TH
SUBJ: LAO RESISTANCE SITUATION

REF: (A) VIENTIANE 0395, (B) UDORN 0045

1. BY CHANCE SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK, FORMER LAO DEFENSE MINISTER, VISITED EMBOFF SHORTLY AFTER THE RECEIPT OF REFTELS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITY OF THE US PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION'S NOTING TO THE VIETNAMESE DURING THE MARCH VISIT THAT THE US OPPOSED THE CONTINUING AND INCREASING PRESENCE OF VIETNAMESE FORCES IN LAOS. HE NOTED THAT THE US AND THE PRC SHARED AN OPPOSITION TO THE VIETNAMESE ROLE IN LAOS AND THOUGHT WE COULD MAKE COMMON CAUSE TO RES-
TRAIN THE VIETNAMESE. SISOUK THOUGHT THERE WAS CONNIVANCE BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE-ORIENTED LAO COMMUNISTS AND HANOI SINCE THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF BOTH WAS TO CREATE A SITUATION FAVORING THE DEPARTURE OF LAO TO THAILAND AND THE GRADUAL REPLACEMENT BY ETHNIC
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VIETNAMESE. SISOUK SAID THAT HE WOULD WRITE TO HIGH RANKING FRIENDS IN THE US TO CONVINCE THEM THAT THE US SHOULD TAKE A STAND ON THIS ISSUE WITH THE VIETNAMESE AND SHOULD DISCUSS WITH THE CHINESE COMMON OPPOSITION TO THE VIETNAMESE IN LAOS.

2. SISOUK SAID THAT MOST LAO WERE PREPARED TO HAVE THE

LAO GOVERNED BY A COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IF THAT IS WHAT THE LAO PEOPLE WANTED; IT WAS THE OCCUPATION AND EVENTUAL COLONIALIZATION BY THE VIETNAMESE TO WHICH THEY OBJECTED. THE RESISTANCE FORCES HAD FOUND A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF LAO COMMUNISTS SYMPATHIZED WITH THEM ON THIS POINT, AND THEY COULD NOW COUNT ON HELP FROM THE PATHET LAO IN THEIR ATTACKS ON THE VIETNAMESE FORCES. SISOUK SAID THAT THE RESISTANCE FORCES RECEIVED NO REAL HELP FROM ANY OUTSIDERS, INCLUDING THE THAI. THEY HAD SECRETED ARMS AND AMMUNITION FROM THE TIME OF THE SOUVANNA GOVERNMENT, AND THEY COULD SUPPLEMENT THEM WITH "GIFTS" FROM THE LPLA. ALSO, THE MENTALITY OF THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS WAS NOW DIFFERENT. THEY WERE NOT IN IT FOR THE MONEY AND HENCE THEY DID NOT NEED FANCY UNIFORMS OR PAY; THEY FOUGHT OUT OF HATRED FOR THE VIETNAMESE. THE ONE THING WHICH THEY DID NEED WAS MEDECINE. SISOUK SAID THAT HE WAS IN INDIRECT CONTACT WITH THESE FORCES AND GAVE THEM HIS MORAL, AND HE HOPED NOW SOME DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT. THEIR LEADERS, HE AGREED WERE NOT THE FORMER WELL KNOWN MILITARY LEADERS (SUCH AS SOUTCHAY, NOW IN THE US, OR KOUPRASITH AND THONGLITH, BOTH IN FRANCE AND RECENTLY SEEN AT A FUNERAL BY EMBOFF). THE REAL RESISTANCE LEADERS ARE FORMERLY UNKNOWN CAPTAINS, LIEUTENANTS AND ADJUTANTS.

3. COMMENT: LIKE MANY OTHER LAO IN FRANCE, SISOUK ATTEMPTS TO FOLLOW CLOSELY EVENTS IN LAOS AND CLAIMS CONTACT, AT LEAST INDIRECT, WITH THE RESISTANCE
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MOVEMENT. HE ACCURATELY TICKED OFF THE PLACES WHERE THE RESISTANCE HAD RECENTLY SCORED SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS. SISOUK ALSO MAINTAINS HIS OPTIMISM ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR REVERSING THE SITUATION IN LAOS IF ONLY, REPEAT IF ONLY ONE CAN GET THE VIETNAMESE TO STAY OUT OF THE COMBAT. ON THIS OCCASION HE EVEN CLAIMED THAT A FURTHER INCREASE IN VIETNAMESE FORCES WOULD FURTHER POLARIZE THE SITUATION IN LAOS, CAUSING EVEN MORE LPLA TO RALLY TO THE RESISTANCE, AND SHORT OF PHYSICAL EXTERMINATION THE LAO WOULD FIGHT UNTIL THE VIETNAMESE ARE EXPELLED. RUSH

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